

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman

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In These Pages

World Institute on Christian Education.....	1
Koinonia Corner by D. F. Sears.....	3
Ten Years of Rural Evangelism in Japan.....	4
Christian Chairman of Japan Labor Union.....	5
Bible Study Groups in Japan Self-Defence Forces.....	5
Asian Home Life Conference Report.....	6

WORLD INSTITUTE ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The big news in Japan this month is the World Institute on Christian Education being conducted at Kobe and Seiwa Colleges in Nishinomiya from July 19 through August 1. So many other conferences are being held in connection with this Institute and the World Convention which will convene in Tokyo on August 6 that it would make a burdensome list to name them all here. The General Assembly of the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association is to be held at Atami between the Institute and the Convention and other conferences for youth, audio-visual, literature, and peace movement leaders are being staged at adjoining times to make use of the world-wide leadership of the Christian movement which is present in Japan this summer.

No. 129 - August 1, 1958 - 2 -

At the Institute in Nishinomiya some 56 countries are represented by approximately 280 persons where the color bar, the language barrier and cultural differences are washed away in the great realization of the theme: "Christ is the Way, the Truth, the Life." Leading the Institute in its worship and Bible study and setting the tone for all the commission studies is the Rev. R. H. Hamilton, pastor of Union Congregational Church, Brighton, England, formerly Principal of the Westhill Training College, "England's Hartford Seminary." Delegates agree that Mr. Hamilton's devotional leadership at the Institute is a high spiritual experience.

Serving as chairman of the Plenary Meetings is the Rev. Dr. Paul H. Veith of Yale Divinity School. Nelson Chappel, Russell Harrison, Andrew Wright and Everett M. Stowe are the staff members from New York and London who are giving administrative work and guidance. Head of the entire Institute is the Rev. Mr. Kozaki of Japan as Director. Because membership in the Institute was limited to 12 persons from Japan, because of the great need of Christian leadership in the field of Christian education in this country, a "sister Institute" is being held simultaneously at Kansei Gakuin University for Japanese personnel and members of the major Institute from many countries are giving some of their time going to this "sister Institute" and giving leadership. The two Institutes met together for the worship period on Thursday morning of the first week.

The first two days of meetings were primary in Plenary session where the delegates heard four major addresses and then panel discussion speakers on the four main subjects or background issues. The four principal speakers were: Professor Christian G. Baeta of Ghana who is on his way to be a visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He spoke on the theme, "Christian Education Faces a World of Rapid and Bewildering Change." Professor Baeta said that the rapid and bewildering changes across the world are based on a new and general realization of the infinite value of man. He was followed by Bishop Enrico Sobrepena of the Philippines, chairman of the East Asia Christian Council, who spoke on the subject, "Christian Religious Education to Enable an Individual to Live as a Christian Person in His Community". Bishop Sobrepena said that salvation begins with the simple acts of believing and proclamation "but must needs be carried on through faithful demonstration of the works of the Spirit in a person in all his varying relations and throughout the whole of life."

No. 129 - August 1, 1958 - 3 -

The second day of Plenary sessions brought the Rev. Dr. Marshall Dendy, USA, to the rostrum to speak on the subject, "Christian Education in the Light of the New Interest in the Bible." He was followed in the afternoon by the Methodist Bishop in Argentina, Sante U. Barbier, who spoke on this topic: "Christian Education and the New Interest in Theology."

Each delegate received a Resource Book, 218 pages, including answers from all the countries represented on the background issues in their local situations. The Resource Book which was edited in New York by Everett M. Stowe, editor of CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, is a publication of the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association primarily for the meetings this Summer.

It is probably unnecessary to say that this report of the Institute is brief and incomplete.

KOINONIA CORNER BY D. F. SEARS

On 16 July 1958, the Base Problem Committee (Kichi Mondai Iinkai) of the National Christian Council of Japan dedicated a unique new project in their attempt to minister to America service personnel in Japan.

Thirty-five Japanese pastors and American service Chaplains gathered on the second and third floors of the Suehiro Building in downtown Yokohama for the service of dedication. Chaplain (CDR) John Craven, USN, of Atsugi Naval Air Station delivered the principal address, explaining some of the relationships between NCC Japan and the thirty-seven U. S. A. denominations of the Cooperative Committee on the Ministry to Service Personnel in the Far East. He explained how financial assistance and personnel offered through this Cooperative Committee are utilized by NCC Japan in founding and maintaining activities and gathering places to promote friendship between U. S. servicemen and their Japanese Christian brothers.

After readings from the Scriptures and prayers in Japanese and in English, and the common singing of a hymn, words of greeting and welcome were offered by the Rev. Raïchi Manabe, chairman of the Base Problem Committee, by the Rev. Shiro Takizawa, representing the churches of Yokohama, by Airman Second Class James George of Johnson Air Base, by the Honorable N. Tanaka, Assistant Mayor of Yokohama, and by the Rev. Kiyoshi Hirai, General Secretary of NCC Japan. Other friends and visitors, including the supervisory staff chaplains for U. S. Army and Navy forces in Japan, were introduced. Dedicatory prayers and the benediction were offered by a Japanese pastor, a U. S. Navy Chaplain, and an English clergyman.

No. 129 - August 1, 1958 - 4 -

The staff of "Koinonia Corner", the Rev. Donald Sears and Mr. Yoshinori Maruyama, explained that varied activities such as pingpong, snacks, study and discussion hours, occasional trips and movies, and singing would be flavored with American informality. The facilities of the building rented for the project include a snack room, a sports room, a lounge, bunkroom, and shower, and are to be opened for use six days each week. Particularly attractive programs are scheduled for those evenings after military paydays when many U. S. servicemen are visiting the city; and Bible study and discussion hours designed to draw Christian Japanese youth and U. S. servicemen together are scheduled each Sunday afternoon. Simple suppers and snacks will be free for American servicemen, while other meals will be served periodically before religious services in the American Chapel Center nearby. Mr. Sears voiced hope that the project would stimulate the Chaplains' religious programs, foster creative contact between Japanese and American young people, and further the work of Yokohama churches.

A Supervisory Board of three Chaplains, four Japanese pastors, and two representative missionaries has been formed to guide the staff in devising and scheduling activities.

"Koinonia Corner" is the second such project of the Base Problem Committee, NCC Japan, now in operation, the other being the Christian Fellowship Center near Johnson Air Base. Occasional fellowship activities are supervised in three other areas by the Committee: in Fuchu, in Tachikawa, and in Kobe.

TEN YEARS OF RURAL EVANGELISM IN JAPAN

The Rev. T. Kimata, Chairman of the Central Rural Evangelism Committee of the United Church of Christ in Japan, speaking recently to the fourteen district chairmen said:

"The first five-year plan launched in 1950 attached primary importance to restoration of rural churches and the establishment of new rural centers. The second five-year plan emphasizes the rural church's achievement of self support. This latter plan will be completed in 1959 and then the question, 'How to push an over-all program of rural evangelism as Protestant Christianity embarks upon its second century. Out of 1500 churches in the United Church, roughly half (about 750) can be called rural churches, but the actual number of members of these 750 is 6,000 or 7,000 out of a total United Church membership of approximately 170,000. In Japan rural evangelism is synonymous with pioneering work, requiring a new scope to the process of Christian evangelization, with an ultimate goal of many financially independent rural churches.

ONE OF THESE IS IN BIRMINGHAM THE OTHER IN LONDON

CHRISTIAN CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN LABOR UNION

A Christian chairman was recently re-elected to head the Labor Union of the National Railways Association of Japan. Isamu Koyanagi resigned at the end of the 17th extra-ordinary meeting of the Union in Shizuoka city in late January when he was unable to unify various factions among the membership, but on four subsequent ballots, was re-elected to his former post as chairman. Koyanagi is a member of the Ogikubo Northern Church which belongs to the United Church of Christ, and last year participated as a speaker in the United Church's concentrated Occupational Evangelism campaign.

BIBLE STUDY GROUPS IN JAPAN SELF-DEFENCE FORCES

To imagine an officially recognized Bible study group within the old Japanese Army and Navy system is quite difficult. However, in today's Japanese self-defence forces, several such groups exist, and with official sanction.

One of these is in Shikaya, the navy air force center, where two years ago a few Christians stationed there started a Bible class. As the attendance grew, they applied to their Service Section to have their Bible Class recognized as a regular club activity. Their commanders gave them immediate clearance, and also with official recognition, a place to meet and an annual grant of ¥15,000 (\$40).

The Bible study group meets once a week, with a local pastor as their teacher. The 48 members who now make up the group include officers and men of various ranks, as well as men and women from offices and ground crews.

When there was a change of command last year, it was feared that the new commander, a graduate of the old navy academy, might discontinue their official recognition. However, all officers have been most friendly and helpful in their attitude toward the Bible study group. It is thought by some that this may be the result of influence felt by having chaplains in the US Armed Forces.

In the Navy Technical School Center at Etajima, a Christian officer, Captain Shimizu, who is head of the department of education of the school, has started a Bible class. There is also a Bible class at Iwakuni air base, sponsored by a UN air force chaplain stationed there.

(Source: Kirisuto Shimbun No. 584 May 10)

of home life this country is not a thing to be
envied, and the same is true of the life of the
people of the United States.

No. 129 - August 1, 1958 - 6 -

ASIAN HOME LIFE CONFERENCE REPORT

Returned recently from the Asian Home Life Lecture Conference held in Chenmai, Thailand from February 1 to April 25, the Japanese delegate, Rev. Shinji Iwamura gave his report to the Home Life Committee of the NCC. The leaders of the Home Life Lecture conference, Dr. and Mrs. Mace of England, conducted a two hour class every morning, giving a total of 120 class hours. In the afternoons the delegates studied in the library, with Dr. and Mrs. Mace guiding their reading.

Rev. Iwamura is the pastor of the Omori Megumi Church in Tokyo. The leader of the lecture conference, Dr. Mace, is head of the Home Life department of the World Council.

Concerning points particularly applicable to conditions of family life and Christianity in Japan, Mr. Iwamura pointed out the following facts. While Japan may be considered a leading Asiatic nation in political and economic affairs, in the matter of home life this country is not in a position of leadership. For example, the Home Life Committee of the UCC is under the women's department, while in other nations both men and women are concerned with these problems, giving a better balanced approach to the questions to be solved. Also, the position of women in Japan still lacks the complete equality desirable for well-balanced home life.

